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UNCLAS HARARE 002421

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR AF/S
NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR JFRAZER
USDOC FOR 2037 DIEMOND
TREASURY FOR OREN WYCHE-SHAW
PASS USTR FLORIZELLE LISER
STATE PASS USAID FOR MARJORIE COPSON

[E](#). O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAGR](#) [ECON](#) [EINV](#) [ETRD](#) [PGOV](#) [ZI](#)

SUBJECT: GOZ to seize equipment on resettled farms

[1](#). (U) Summary: The GOZ has taken fast track land reform to the next level, authorizing its agents to seize equipment such as tractors, sprinklers and ploughs from former commercial farmers. End Summary.

[2](#). (U) Statutory Instrument 273A of 2003 allows the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement to assign to any agent the responsibility to "enter any land or premises at any reasonable time" and "acquire any farm equipment or material not currently being used for agricultural purposes." Since it has the effect of a Presidential decree, the GOZ may act upon it immediately, in advance of Parliamentary deliberation. It calls for former commercial farmers who sell or damage their farm equipment to be fined or imprisoned. While the instrument lays out a compensation timetable, it will be the responsibility of the Ministry to determine fair valuation.

[3](#). (SBU) Comment: Efforts by former, mostly white farmers to stash farm equipment around the country have irritated the GOZ and some land reform beneficiaries. However, movable farm equipment and supplies (such as fertilizer) have remained the property of the ex-farmer, who retained the right to sell but not export these implements. Some held on to equipment because they hoped to return to their land - others because they could not get what they considered a fair price due to the glut of equipment on the market. This legislation will permit many beneficiaries to seize equipment, perhaps through force. The GOZ has increasingly moved beyond the idea that land reform should be limited to redistribution of arable white farms. Conservancies and certain businesses are also now included. We expect the GOZ will establish very low values for seized equipment, applying the official exchange rate or an amount that does not reflect Zimbabwe's high inflation.

Sullivan